

Since my capstone project is essentially a travel app - I chose the following 3 competitors: Kayak.com, Lonely Planet, and Airbnb.

The three heuristics I chose to compare are:

- 1) Visibility of System Status - the system should always keep users informed.
- 2) Match Between System and the Real World - should speak the users' language.
- 3) User Control and Freedom - users need an emergency exit in case of user mistakes and also needs to support undo and redo.

## Kayak.com

### 1) Visibility of System Status:

- a) Kayak does a reasonable job of making sure that users are informed. However, the user really needs to know the system (or at least the standards used by other travel sites - with the From and To with dates / destinations on the top).

**KAYAK** Hotels Flights Cars Packages Rentals Cruises More My Account

San Francisco (SFO) Singapore (SIN) Fri 11/17 - Thu 12/7 1 adult, Economy

OUR ADVICE **Buy now**  
Prices are unlikely to decrease within 7 days

582 out of 684 **RESET**

**Stops**

- nonstop \$2040
- 1 stop \$2050
- 2+ stops \$2159

**Times**

Take-off San Francisco (SFO)  
Fri 8:30p - 11:00p

Take-off Singapore (SIN)  
Thu 12:00a - Fri 12:00a

Landing Singapore (SIN)  
Sun 8:00a - Mon 10:30p

Landing San Francisco (SFO)  
Thu 7:30a - Sat 11:00a

**Durations**

**Track Prices** Receive emails with price changes and travel tips for this trip.  OFF

Additional bag fees may apply.

**Emirates** Fly to Singapore  
Enjoy free onboard Wi-Fi, gourmet cuisine and up to 2,500 channels of entertainment.  
emirates.com/us | Sponsored **View Deal**

**BEST FLIGHTS**

United	10:40 pm SFO	nonstop	8:00 am SIN (+2)	17h 20m	\$2040 United
United	10:00 am SIN	nonstop	8:40 am SFO	14h 40m	<b>View Deal</b>
United	10:40 pm SFO	nonstop	8:00 am SIN (+2)	17h 20m	\$2050 United
United	11:00 am SIN	LAX	1:01 pm SFO	18h 01m	<b>View Deal</b>
United	10:40 pm SFO	nonstop	8:00 am SIN (+2)	17h 20m	\$2050 United
United	11:00 am SIN	LAX	1:58 pm SFO	18h 58m	<b>View Deal</b>
United	10:40 pm SFO	nonstop	8:00 am SIN (+2)	17h 20m	\$2050 United
United	11:00 am SIN	LAX	3:12 pm SFO	20h 12m	<b>View Deal</b>

Get notifications when prices change.  
**KAYAK Price Alerts**

**Compare Sites vs. KAYAK**

- UNITED** COMPARE
- EXPLORERTRIP** COMPARE
- Emirates** COMPARE
- priceline** COMPARE
- cheapOair** COMPARE
- flyus.com** COMPARE
- justfly.com** COMPARE
- ORBITZ** COMPARE

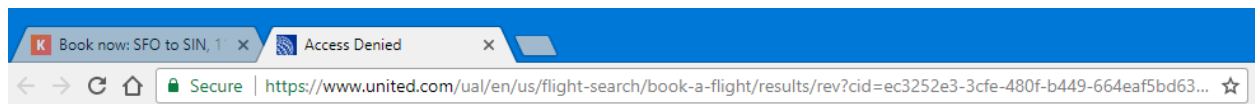
**COMPARE ALL**

2) Match between system and the real world:

- a) Kayak speaks the users' language with common travel phrases and words. The information that they show appears in a logical order. For example, when kayak.com first loads, it first goes to 'Flights'. This makes sense for travelers, because getting the flight to the destination should be first. After booking a flight, they're able to book hotels, cars, etc.

3) User control and freedom:

- a) Kayak does a lot of redirecting to other airlines. For example, in my sample search for a flight between SFO and Singapore, I got lots of results from United. However, I received the following error screen when I was redirected to United:



## Access Denied

You don't have permission to access "http://www.united.com/ual/en/us/flight-search/book-a-flight/results/rev?" on this server.

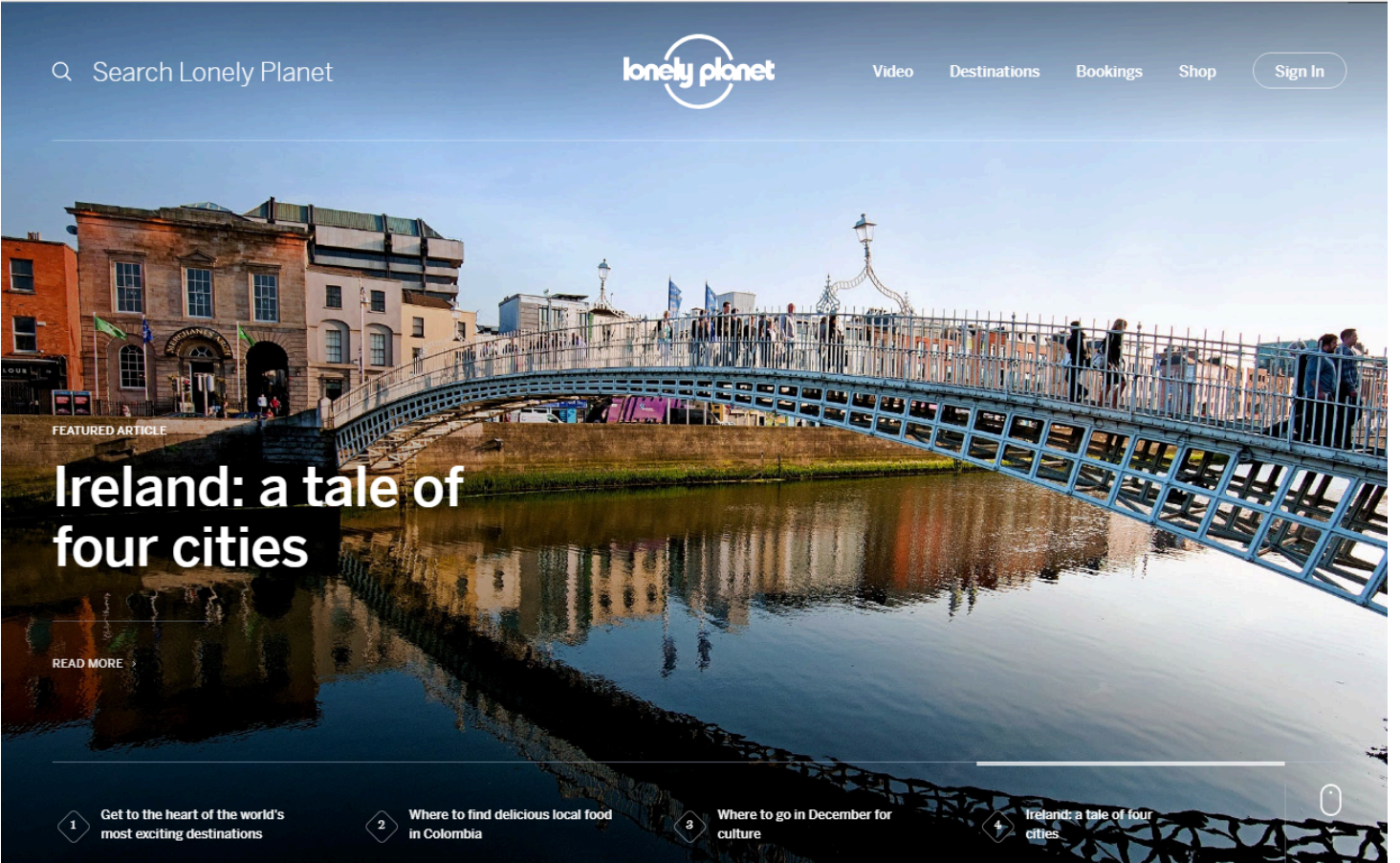
Reference #18.1a0c1160.1510980400.4319019

There is no action that I can take to cancel the redirection. The only thing I can do in this case is to exit the second window and click back on my open Kayak.com, hoping that I remembered which one I selected. I think this could be resolved by opening a webpop within Kayak.com that shows the United flight. If United doesn't load for some reason, it could show a 404 error on the webpop and allowing the user to exit.

## Lonely Planet

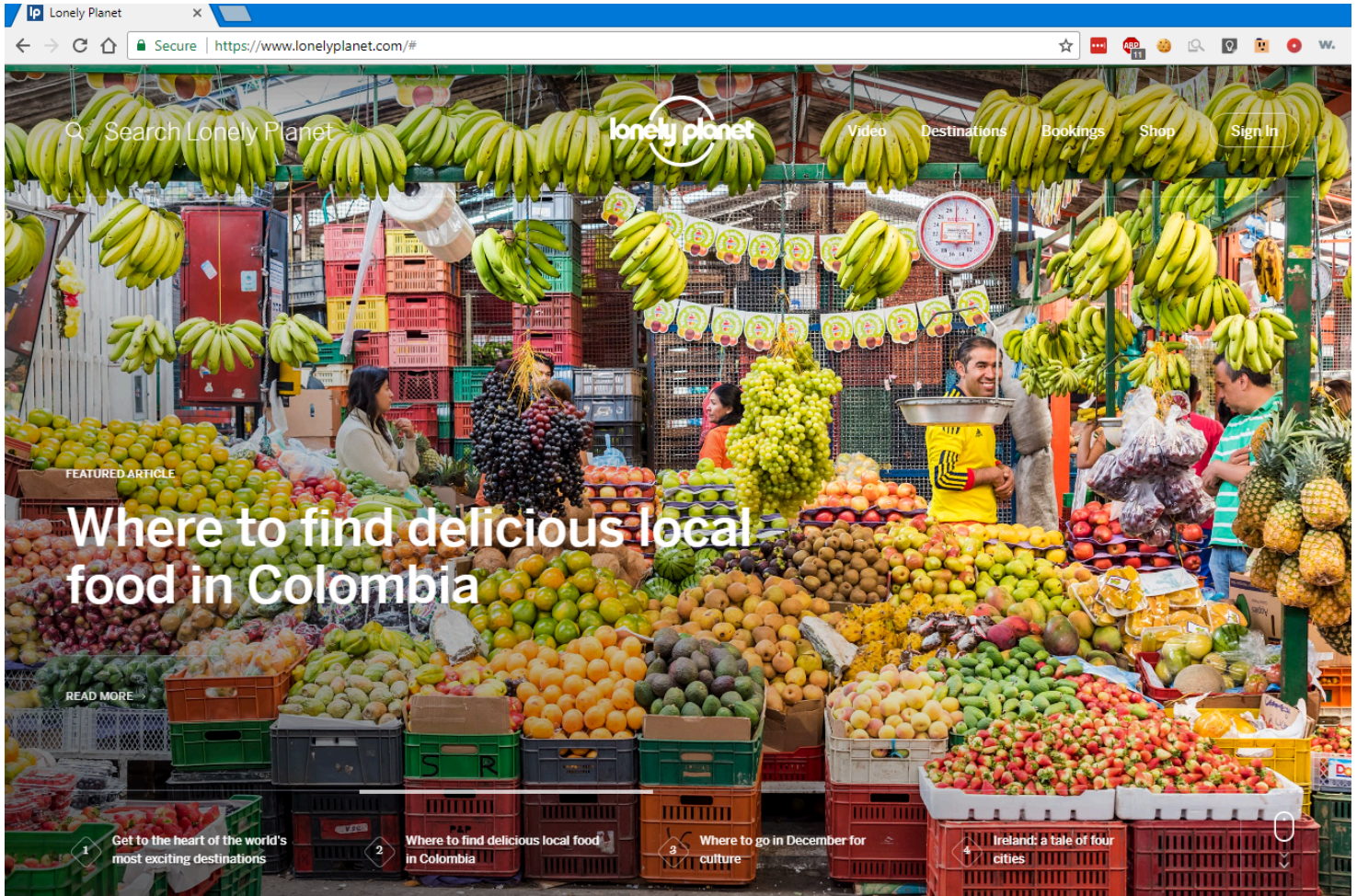
1) Visibility of System Status:

- a) The moment I go to Lonelyplanet.com, I am not sure what is going on or what I'm supposed to. The following is what I see:



The 'Search Lonely Planet' portion is really hard to see with some of the brighter pics, like this (white font + bright pictures = eyestrain):





2) Match between system and the real world:

- a) Lonely Planet uses common travel terms that are easy to understand.
- b) As far as the information appearing in a natural and logical order, Lonely Planet misses the mark here. When I go to the landing page, I first see the confusing pages above. Next, as I scroll down, I see an 'ad' to purchase Lonely Planet's guides. Going down further shows 'Videos', 'Travel Inspiration', 'Prepare for your trip', 'Articles', 'Sign up for our weekly newsletter', and then an option to purchase Travel Insurance. The order that these sections have been placed doesn't quite make sense.

3) User control and freedom:

- a) Users are allowed to 'undo' their actions when browsing through articles and videos, by hitting the back button. However, similar to Kayak.com, when users are looking for flights, they are taken to another browser tab that redirects to the actual airlines' website.

## Airbnb

- 1) Visibility of System Status - the system should always keep users informed.

- a) Airbnb does a great job of keeping the user informed and letting them know quickly where they are.
- 2) Match Between System and the Real World - should speak the users' language.
  - a) Airbnb uses common terminology for renting, experiences, and restaurants that is easy to understand. Their help section is also easy to go through and questions like 'Can I pay with any currency?' and 'I can't get in touch with my host', indicates that Airbnb is using terminology that is easily understood by its' users.
- 3) User Control and Freedom - users need an emergency exit in case of user mistakes and also needs to support undo and redo.
  - a) While reserving a home, experience, or restaurant, it is very easy to "undo" it by exiting out of the tabbed page. Since all selections open a new browser tab, cancelling the order is very easy to do.